



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE March 6, 2009

Meg Hooper, Branch Chief, Planning Branch 509-7128

House Bill 1079 - An Act CONCERNING THE CONNECTICUT HEALTH INFORMATION NETWORK

The Department of Public Health provides the following information with regard to House Bill 1079.

The General Assembly directed DPH to work with the University of Connecticut to develop the Connecticut Health Information Network feasibility plan in 2007. UCONN was the fiduciary agent for the \$500,000 allocated for this project and created 2 workgroups with representatives from partners as required by the law—DDS, DOIT, OHCA, DCF—and OPM. The Policy Workgroup reviewed legal, regulatory, and ethical strengths and limitations for the implementation of a CHIN while the Technical Workgroup reviewed technical and systemic strengths and limitations.

HB 1079 proposes to consolidate the various statutory restrictions to sharing confidential data. It needs to be clearly understood that there are statutory and regulatory mechanisms already in place by which DPH may disclose personally identifiable information held in agency databases to others. Also, the reference to "*such disclosure may be denied if it would constitute a violation of federal law*" is irrelevant since there is a prohibition against violating federal laws through the enactment of new state statutes.

While the Department supports the concept of a Connecticut Health Information Network, and has worked with the UCONN Center for Public Health and Health Policy over the past 2 years, the Department has neither received nor reviewed the feasibility plan that would present the explicit protections provided for the state agencies to contribute data to the Network and to the individuals' whose health information is collected by state agencies.

The Department recommends that the UCONN CHIN Feasibility Plan should be submitted for review and comment prior to any legislative action affecting privacy and security issues that are of concern to the Governor, state agencies, the General Assembly, and our residents.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

Phone:



Telephone Device for the Deaf: (860) 509-7191

410 Capitol Avenue - MS # _____

P.O. Box 340308 Hartford, CT 06134

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